2. Revenue
3. Planning
4. Ocean Development
5. Space
6. Supply
7. Atomic Energy
8. Economic Affairs
9. External Affairs
10. Petroleum & Natural Gas
11. Sugar and Edible Oils
12. Steel
13. Legal Affairs
14. Personnel and Training
15. Bio-Technology
16. Science & Technology
17. Scientific and Industrial Research
18. Social Justice and Empowerment*

*Only 2% of the funds for SCD should be allocated to the NE. The norm of 10% of the total allocation should apply only w.r. to the allocation for sectors other than SCD.

Exemptions on Excise Duty on sale of Jute Bags

605. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Jute Mills have been exempted from payment of Excise Duty on sale of jute bags;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the quantum of loss that the Government have to incur as 100% foodgrain and sugar are to be packed in jute bags under Packaging Control Order;

(c) whether Government would withdraw this exemption particularly when the West Bengal Government continue to levy sales tax on these items; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All jute and jute products were exempted from excise duty in the budget for 1997-98 to revive and give a thrust to the ailing jute industry.

(c) and (d) In view of the impending budget, it is not possible to indicate any response.

Financial irregularities by M/s. Reliance Petroleum Ltd.

606. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s Reliance Petroleum Ltd. have been indulging in financial irregularities in the Public Issue funds of their refinery project and complaints have been made to Government in this regards;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action, if any, has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) The required information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Loan to Farmers

†607. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to provide loan to the farmers on the pattern of the industries for purchasing land; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Finance Minister during his meeting with the Chief Executives of Public Sector Banks on 14 November, 2000 emphasized the need to step up priority sector

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.